

Western MRS Meeting
August 31, 2005
A/B Tech Buncombe County

Counties Present: Buncombe, Catawba, Cleveland, *Gaston*, Haywood, Henderson, Lincoln, Transylvania, Watauga, Yancey
(Counties that are not currently MRS counties are italicized.)

State Staff: Tony Troop, Holly McNeill, Dawn Warren, Joy Gossett, Ann Robinson, Rosalyn Thompson, John Mc McMann, Susan Sanderson Heather Thomas.

Agenda

Introduction/News from Raleigh

New Staff, Legislative Update

Child & Family Team Meetings

Who Facilitates, How do you pay for outside facilitators, How are they working, What do the initial meetings look like, Defining CFTs.

New Staff in Raleigh

- Tomica Williams has taken Amelia Lance's position
- Kate Johnson in Data Management (works with System of Care and IV-E Waiver), and Andrea Stein (temp filling in for Pam)

Legislation

- Appeals Process took out the line saying the substantiation letter had to be delivered by the sheriff.
- Sexual Battery is added to the sexual registry, also will have to provide DNA if convicted.
- Indecent exposure is also added to the registry, more severe penalties if victim under 16.
- \$2 million for additional social workers still in budget.
- Governor's plan for CFT still in.

Note there will soon be a link on the MRS website to material that we have collected from counties.

Child and Family Team Meetings

The Family Centered Meeting project can help with setting up CFTs. They will come to your county and give TA for the CFT, even sit in on one or co-facilitate if you like.

- They list facilitator forum meetings on the MRS list serve (this meets quarterly) but you don't have to go to one of those to use their services.
- Services are **FREE** and not limited to current MRS counties.
- Contact Cherie Spear.

- When Holly began talking to all the counties, one of the things a lot of counties talked about was CFTs.

Who facilitates?

- Haywood uses IV-E Waiver for an outside person (retired supervisor)
- Buncombe uses IV-E Waiver and works with a mediation center. Only use outside facilitators if there has been an issue with the social worker facilitating their own (and this is not often).
- Lincoln couple of people that were trained as part of family group conferencing (staff)
- Watauga neutral 3rd party
- Henderson combination of staff, outside agencies.
- 7 Western counties got together and pooled resources to use a mediation center.
- If outside facilitator, social worker does all the paperwork, if internal, the agency staff try to split the paperwork.

How do agencies decide who might be a good facilitator?

- Their own interest plus recommendation from others who have knowledge of that person's skill set.

When you use an outside facilitator who calls the participants?

- Usually the social worker who has the case. If the facilitator calls with the specifics, the SW has called to give a heads up beforehand.
- If it is another agency person, social worker with the case does all the legwork, that person just shows up and facilitates.

Getting other professionals to the table

- Offer to have the meeting at their office, maybe during the client's regular counseling session, or have them on speakerphone if meeting elsewhere.
- May not have many at the first meeting because they are not really involved yet.
- Can bring letters of information from them at some early meetings if they can't be there.
- Some counties have had issues with community partners not wanting to be a part of CFTs and interact with the family. They have said they will stop reporting if the DSS forces the issue. One county feels that this is partially responsible for reduction in reporting.
 - On the positive side, this will reduce unnecessary reporting. Some counties felt that frequently schools reported for reasons that were not really CPS issues. Having to own the report reduces some of this because reporter will think twice before reporting and sometimes realize there is not safety issue.

- The Leandro decision will force schools to get behind CFTs because they will be having them. (Decision ruled that NC schools failed to provide adequate education to low wealth/high risk children.)

When are families getting engaged in CFTs?

- Most people don't have them until after decision is made. There may be some mention of them during assessment, or give them a brochure then
- Some have a CFT in 210 to try and help prevent from going to 215.

Attorneys in CFTs

- Attorneys are getting involved, especially in Foster Care mtgs. The whole flow of the meeting is disrupted and they often won't let the client talk.
- Buncombe's policy is that if the family has an attorney present, the agency attorney is present as well.
- Other suggestion was to have a clear focus of what the meeting is about and not diverge from that. (Ex: Only safety is an issue here, not who made the report.)
- Probably helpful to have an outside, neutral facilitator when there are attorney(s) present.

Incorporating MRS into After-Hours System how are family assessments that come in after hours taken?

- Several counties have CPS and APS linked, particularly for on-call.
- Yancey call the worker who will do the assessment Monday over the weekend to give a heads up.
- Buncombe on-call volume is high, leave assessments for Monday.
- Haywood dedicated on-call worker, if time, will do assessment.
- Transylvania on-call rotates; people not on rotation do assessments.
- Catawba similar to Buncombe.
- Lincoln 1 full time on-call, does 24 hour response, but leaves others for regular staff.
- Henderson 2 on call respond to all. They do not schedule things for other staff on Mondays.
- Watauga rotate on call. Take what comes in.
- Cleveland similar to Buncombe, but they won't spring an appointment on people on Monday.

Future Meetings

- 9/16 Higgins Methodist Church in Burnsville, Yancey Co.
- More information will be sent out on list serve.